

Will You Be Able to Vote?

New Voting Requirement

As required by a 2005 law, voters at the polls will need to show a photo ID issued by the state, either an Indiana driver's license or a state issued ID from the BMV for non-drivers.



Many of us believe this law, now being challenged in federal court, is unconstitutional but until a court rules otherwise—it is the law and we must all show a photo ID in order to vote.

If you would like further information please call the Marion County Voter Registration office at 327-5040.

Representative John Day
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Representative John Day



Dear Friend,

In this spring season of new life, my spirits are up as I review for you the 2006 legislative session and district news. While the Republicans tell us it was a terrific session and many Democrats rate the session very poorly, I believe the answer is somewhere in the middle, perhaps a C or C+ on a rating scale.

In this session, like many before it, there appeared to be a struggle between economic development (tax breaks and other incentives for business growth) and human development (education, health care, job training and scholarships) as to which one had priority. We saw this played out in the passage of Major Moves, the highway bill, and once again the failure to enact full day kindergarten.

The worthwhile goal of economic development (jobs) will not be achieved without a parallel drive to strengthen human development in our state. We cannot have one without the other.

My own efforts this year produced mixed results. On the plus side, I was able to amend our 1993 School Breakfast Law to expand the program to an additional 135 schools. However, my ongoing effort to raise the state's minimum wage was blocked in the House.

In this newsletter let me review a very promising consumer protection law regarding home improvement fraud, plus a new approach to dealing with abandoned buildings that harm our neighborhoods. Community organizations played a key role in this new housing law. Also, in the Good News Department let me report on a recent visit to a reborn Howe High School renamed Howe Academy.

For those of us who are parents, grandparents, teachers, public officials and others who care deeply about children let me share this thought from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, **"The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it leaves to its children."**

All the best,

A handwritten signature of John J. Day in dark ink.

John J. Day

2006 Session Report

Consumer Protection

How many times have we heard about someone, especially an older person, being cheated in a home improvement experience by an unethical contractor. In response to this problem Representative Phyllis Pond (R-New Haven) sponsored one of the best consumer protection bills of the session.

H.B. 1207 makes it easier to prove home improvement fraud and increases the penalties for such conduct.

In the new law, fraud occurs when the consumer makes a request for a written warranty or a guarantee and the contractor fails to do so. Likewise, fraud happens if products used in the home improvement work have been diluted or modified, or if the contractor falsely tells the consumer that a prior contractor recommended the new contractor to the consumer.

Giving an incorrect business address or phone number is another example, as is falsely claiming to be licensed, certified or insured.

For all of us the message coming from this new law effective July 1, 2006, **is to always ask the prospective contractor to provide a written warranty, a phone number and to ask if he or she is licensed, certified or insured and if the person has obtained all the necessary permits or licenses before starting the work.**

Doing so will give us greater protection and make it easier to prosecute such cases when necessary.

For more information you might call the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's office 1-800-382-5516 or look at their web page www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/consumer.

Improving Neighborhoods

I have a story to tell about a new law that will benefit our community. This law was enacted in large part due to the leadership and persistence of a neighborhood organization in our district. First, some background information.

Concerned about unsafe and abandoned buildings and their harmful effect on our neighborhoods, I sponsored a 2003 law that gives cities and community organizations more authority in dealing with owners of such buildings and increased the penalty for non-compliance.

Also in 2003, and in the previous year, I sponsored a companion bill to expedite (shorten) the time that owners of such buildings, who were delinquent in their property tax payments, would have to redeem them in a property tax sale. **The intent here was to reduce the long delays in taking remedial action on these problem properties.** These efforts plus one in 2005 were unsuccessful.

Now the "Good News." The bill to permit the expedited tax sale for abandoned buildings started in the Senate this year being co-sponsored by Senators Tom Wyss (R-Ft. Wayne) and John Broden (D-South Bend). It (S.B. 341) was easily approved in the Senate only to be temporarily stalled in the House. Though not a sponsor of this year's successful bill, I helped. However, the real stars in this story were people from the Arsenal Heights Civic League, NESCO and other concerned citizens.

They organized an effective rally and news conference on March 3 that gained considerable attention and kept the issue alive. They also continued to contact legislators. Along with a few others, I visited Representative Ralph Ayres (R-Chesterton) who then was agreeable to add the language of S.B. 341 into his bill, H.B. 1102. Both chambers approved and we have a new law to address the problem of abandoned buildings.

Thank you Arsenal Heights and all those who helped enact this important new law.

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T.C. Howe High School/Academy

Being a teacher I always enjoy visiting schools in the district. Hearing the views of students and teachers provides valuable insights about both the progress and problems within our schools.

Let me briefly report on a recent encouraging visit to Howe Academy, formerly Howe High School. Many east siderers were disappointed when the original school closed in 1995. In 2000 it reopened as a middle school. Two years later a decision was made to re-establish the high school and also keep grades seven and eight on the Howe campus.

Speaking with Ms. Silverman, the well-organized principal, and other staff members, I had the impression that the school was headed in the right direction and that with 1,200 students it was quite manageable. The seniors in Mr. Dodd's American Government class are part of the first graduating class of the new Howe Academy and I spent some time with them.

The students were alert, participated in the discussion, asked good questions and offered possible solutions to some current issues. I urged them to register and vote, to become active in the community and to use their talent and energy to improve our society.

It is my hope that the class of 2006, like so many of the students before them in an earlier era at Howe, will be a credit to their school and make positive contributions to the community in the years to come.



Rep. Day meets with Mr. Dodd's American Government class at Howe Academy.



Rep. Day discussing government issues at Howe Academy.